

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 TRSE-00 /074 W  
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R 020948Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
SECSTATE WASHDC 8231  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1959

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, IS, ET  
SUBJ: FALASHAS IN ETHIOPIA

REF: TEL AVIV 5652

1. REFTEL, PARA 3, REPORTS ISRAELI MFA OFFICIAL'S REMARKS  
ON CURRENT STATUS FALASHA IN ETHIOPIA. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE,  
REMARKS SUGGEST SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED AND OVERLY DRAMATIC  
VIEW OF FALASHA SITUATION VIA-A-VIS PMGSE.

2. FALASHA HAS TRADITIONALLY SUFFERED DISCRIMINATION IN  
ETHIOPIA SINCE DEMISE FALASHA KINGDOM 300 YEARS AGO. ALL BUT  
FEW FALASHA DENIED RIGHT OWN LAND SINCE THAT TIME, AND FALASHA  
WERE TARGET REPEATED AND OFFICIALLY ENCOURAGED PROSELYTIZING  
CAMPAIGNS. NUMBERS HAVE THUS DROPPED FROM ESTIMATED 300,000  
TO CURRENT 30,000 PLUS ANOTHER 30,000 "CONVERTED FALASHA" WHO  
LIVE OWN SEPARATE LIFE APART FROM CHRISTIANS OR FALASHA.

3. PMGSE ATTITUDE TOWARD FALASHA DOES NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR  
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BE PARTICULARLY DISCRIMINATORY. UNDER LAND REFORM PROCLAMA-  
TION, FALASHA THEORETICALLY ENTITLED OWN LAND. SOME HAVE  
SUCCESSFULLY ASSERTED THIS RIGHT. HOWEVER, RECENT PRESSURE  
UPON FALASHA TO LEAVE THEIR VILLAGES, WHICH IS IN FACT HAP-  
PENING, HAS COME NOT FROM PMGSE BUT FROM LOCAL LANDLORDS  
SEEKING DISPLACE FALASHA TENANTS IN ORDER PREVENT THEM FROM  
MAKING CLAIMS ON LAND UNDER LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION. BECAUSE

FALASHA LIVE LARGELY IN AREAS HOTLY CONTESTED BY ANTI-PMGSE GROUPS (PARTICULARLY ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION WHICH SIDES LARGELY WITH LANDLORDS, AND ALSO BY MARXIST ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY PARTY), PMGSE HAS NOT BEEN IN POSITION DEFEND FALASHAS OR FOR THAT MATTER OTHER TENANTS' RIGHTS IN THIS AREA.

4. WORLD ORT UNION, A JEWISH-BASED ORGANIZATION, HAS BEEN ASSISTING FALASHAS AND HAS APPLIED FOR US AID GRANT TO EXPAND PROGRAM TO FALASHA AND NON-FALASHA IN GONDAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WHERE MOST FALASHA LIVE. USAID DIRECTOR RECENTLY VISITED GONDAR IN CONNECTION PROJECT. HE FOUND FALASHA IN VERY POOR STATE, MANY STILL SHARE-CROPPING AT 50 PERCENT RATE AND FEARFUL OF LOCAL LANDLORDS, EDU, BANDITS, ETC. FALASHA ALSO TRADITIONALLY SUSPICIOUS (ANY) ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND ANXIOUS HOLD ON TO THEIR SEPARATE IDENTITY. USAID DIRECTOR FOUND PMGSE ADMINISTRATOR IN GONDAR WARMLY SUPPORTIVE ORT PROGRAM, AND PRAISED ORT PARTICULARLY FOR WORKING WITH FORMERLY DISCRIMINATED MINORITIES. PMGSE NOW PROVIDING TEACHERS ALONGSIDE ORT-FINANCED TEACHERS IN FALASHA SCHOOLS AND WORKING ON JOINT EFFORTS IN AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH FIELDS. ORT HAS HIRED ISRAELI RURAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERT, ELI TURGEMAN, AS GONDAR FIELD MANAGER AND HE HAS BEEN WELL ACCEPTED BY LOCAL PMGSE AUTHORITIES.

5. PMGSE HAS BEEN CONDUCTING RED TERROR CAMPAIGN FOR SEVERAL  
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MONTHS NOW AND IT IS TRUE OF FALASHA AS OF ANY MINORITY OR POTENTIALLY SEPARATE GROUP THAT THEY WILL COME UNDER SUSPICION FROM PMGSE IF THEY DO NOT SHOW ENTHUSIASTIC ZEAL FOR PMGSE AND ITS RADICAL POLITICAL PROGRAM. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL PMGSE ACTION AGAINST RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, INDEED A DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AMONG ALL FAITHS HAS BEEN ONE OF ITS LOUDLY PROCLAIMED REFORMS, THERE IS NEVERTHELESS INHERENT CONTRADICTION AND THEREBY TENSION BETWEEN RELIGION AND THE RADICAL MARXISM OF THE PMGSE. FALASHA WILL HAVE TO FACE THIS, LACKING THE NUMBERS OR POLITICAL CLOUT OF THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPINGS HERE, IE., ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS. ESCAPE TO ISRAEL IS AN ANSWER CHERISHED BY SOME, ESPECIALLY THOSE EXPOSED TO ISRAELI OR INTERNATIONAL JEWISH CONTACTS IN THE PAST. BUT IT IS PROBABLY IMPRACTICAL FOR VAST MAJORITY POOR, ILLITERATE, UNSKILLED FALASHA SCATTERED IN RURAL AREAS. ORT PROJECT STRESSES GREATER INTEGRATION FALASHAS WITHIN ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY, AS DISTINCT BUT FULLY PARTICIPATORY ETHIOPIAN ETHNIC GROUP, RATHER THAN EMIGRATION.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER REPORTS ON ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE AS THEY COME AVAILABLE.  
MATHERON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, ATROCITIES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**TAGS:** PINS, IS, ET  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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